



PARK DISTRICT
of OAK PARK

STRATEGIC PLAN

2019 THROUGH 2021

Adopted December 13, 2018



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INTRODUCTION

In 2018, the Park District of Oak Park (PDOP) embarked on creating a new three-year strategic plan for 2019 through 2021. The goal of the process was to build on the knowledge and information accumulated over the years from prior plans and to incorporate information from a community engagement process. Information and text from prior plans have been incorporated into this plan.

The Park District successfully implemented strategic plans for both 2013–2015 and 2016–2018. This new plan will allow the District to continue to build on its successes.

Ultimately, in creating the strategic plan, the PDOP will be a focused organization. This strategic focus will be institutionalized across the organization and within the community.

The PDOP is continually planning for the future. The basis for decisions and planning actions is built on the District’s mission, vision and values. The future is dynamic, uncertain, and constantly changing. The strategic plan provides a solid framework through which commissioners and staff can take actions that fulfill their mission and ultimately benefit their constituents.

The PDOP Strategic Plan 2019-2021 is a blueprint that outlines actions that the commissioners and staff will undertake to maintain the highest-quality service delivery desired by the community while operating effectively and efficiently investing taxpayer dollars.

The plan is a dynamic document. Because of this, changes may be made as the PDOP adjusts to new circumstances, while keeping its focus on meeting the needs of the communities and individuals it serves.

PROFILE OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF OAK PARK

The District was created in 1912. The District is located eight miles west of the Chicago “Loop” business district. The District is coterminous with the Village of Oak Park. The total population served by the District is currently estimated to be approximately 52,000.

The governing body of the District is composed of five park commissioners elected for staggered four-year terms. A president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer are selected by the commissioners from among the elected members of the board. The daily administrative functions of the District are the responsibility of the executive director, who is appointed by the board.

The District owns 26 facilities that occupy 84 acres of parkland in the Village of Oak Park. Facilities operated by the District include an administrative center, two outdoor pools, an indoor ice rink, three

historic properties (the Oak Park Conservatory, Cheney Mansion, and Pleasant Home), a gymnastics center, and seven recreation centers. A full schedule of recreation programs is provided by the District, including classes and activities in aerobics, swimming, music, dance, visual arts, and various sports. Recreational activities are available for all ages. The District is a member of the West Suburban Special Recreation Association, which provides recreation services to physically and mentally challenged persons. Approximately 3,000 programs are provided yearly.

STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK

Mission

In partnership with the community, we enrich lives by providing meaningful experiences through programs, parks, and facilities.

Vision

We strive for excellence in serving the well-being and recreational needs of our diverse community through a collaborative, innovative, and sustainable approach.

Strategic Initiatives

Customer & Community Focus	Financial Strength	Organizational Excellence	Staff Excellence	Quality Infrastructure Management
To create memorable experiences	To align resources efficiently	To strive for innovative operational excellence	To foster a culture of innovation	To incorporate sustainable practices
To increase customer loyalty	To optimize return on investment	To develop strategic partnerships	To lead and develop staff	To utilize systematic approaches
To anticipate future needs	To develop sustainable financial plans	To strategically align organizational efforts	To foster a culture of continuous learning	To leverage technology
To engage the community	To maximize funding opportunities			

Values

COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

RESPONSIBLE
LEADERSHIP

INTEGRITY

INNOVATION

SUSTAINABILITY

PROCESS

The PDOP desired an engaging process that created a future vision for the District. The process emphasized simplicity and brevity in its approach and resulted in a plan that the community, commissioners, and employees could easily understand and embrace.

Phase 1: Organization

The aim of this phase was to develop a detailed plan of action for the development of the strategic planning process. A work plan and timeline were developed including roles, tasks, deliverables, deadlines, meetings, and decision-making and approval processes.

Participants: Consultant and staff

A quick scan and update were conducted of the current mission statement, vision, and values to confirm that these high-level statements truly represent the organization.

Mission Statement: A short and revelatory statement that everyone must be able to articulate. It is a definitive statement that describes exactly what the organization does and the reason for its existence. It is the big picture!

Vision: When you think about the future, what do you visualize happening? An organization's vision reveals what the organization aspires to.

Values: Value statements describe the culture of the organization. They include principles and standards of practice that everyone is expected to embrace and display in their actions and words.

Participants: Board and staff

Phase 2: Environmental Scan and Assessment of Current Mission, Vision, and Values

Environmental scanning is a process that systematically surveys and interprets relevant data and information to identify factors that can affect the organization. The information gathered served as a foundation of information on which to build the balanced scorecard framework. External and internal scans were performed.

For the external component, a PEST scan was conducted with the board and senior leadership. The PEST acronym stands for political, economic, social, and technological factors. It is a scan of the external macro environmental factors influencing the PDOP.

In addition, a review and summary of strategic plans from governmental agencies within the community was carried out. Initiatives and partnerships from those organizations were highlighted. Potential influencers that could impact the District were identified. The strategic or comprehensive plans of the Village, school districts, township, and library were among the elements scanned.

For the internal component, a SWOT exercise was utilized with the board and senior leadership. The SWOT acronym stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Additional questions were asked to probe specific areas such as critical issues, customer service, and future services.

Phase 3: Evaluation of PDOP 2016-2018 Strategic Plan Results

Taking a look back at the PDOP 2016-2018 Strategic Plan, commissioners and staff assessed the following: Where have we been? How did we do? Assessment of the current strategy framework was undertaken. Subsequently reviewed, assessed, and evaluated were the STRATEGIES, INITIATIVES, GOALS, and ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES of the previous plan. Reporting on RESULTS included identifying successes, failures, constraints/deterrents, and activators affecting performance. All were considered to build the new plan from the established framework.

Participants: Staff

Phase 4: Approach and Tools

To meet the scope of work described as “conduct a key stakeholder analysis,” a combination of focus groups and modified SWOT analysis was utilized.

Greg Petry Consulting LLC facilitated nine distinct focus group discussions **WITH** members of the community representing the following:

- Governmental leaders
- Faith community leaders
- Educational leaders
- Not-for-profit leaders
- Business leaders
- Key partners
- Affiliate groups
- Media
- Open community forum

This engagement approach was implemented not only to fulfill the scope of the project but to deliver several ancillary benefits:

- Greater community connectiveness with constituents and peers
- Enlightened view and deeper understanding of how PDOP is perceived by the community
- Value added to the process and plan by constituents
- Enhanced image of PDOP
- Enhanced individual and organizational credibility through inclusion
- Reduced divisiveness
- Social equity produced via outreach

Participants: Community, board, and staff

Phase 5: Organize and Analyze Data

In this phase, the consultant sorted and simplified the information collected and identified trends and themes. The consultant involved the staff in nominal group exercises to draw conclusions and identify interesting stories or patterns.

Participants: Consultant (primary) and staff (review)

Phase 6: Identify and Prioritize Actions

The consultant and staff built practical and affordable action items into the plan. These actions and initiatives generally supported the following:

- Continuing to operate the PDOP at a minimum as is
- Focusing on improvement by changing how the PDOP operates
- Adding facilities, parks, programs, and services to benefit individuals, families/community, the environment, and the economy
- Having an awareness of the benefits of parks, programs, and services while being sensitive to the relationship between taxpayer sentiment and the value of service delivery

Participants: Consultant and staff

Phase 7: Finalize Strategic Plan for Board Approval

Presented an executive summary of the process, findings, and future actions to the public and board of commissioners at the December 20, 2018 meeting, seeking acceptance of the *Park District of Oak Park 2019-2021 Strategic Plan*.

Participants: Commissioners, executive director, and consultant

Phase 8: Implementation Process and Reporting

It is incumbent upon the commissioners and staff to implement the plan created.

In addition, updates will be made throughout the process, with reports and messaging as necessary to the commissioners and public.

Participants: Commissioners, executive director, and consultant

2016-2018 STRATEGIC PLAN RESULTS

Creation of the Strategic Plan 2019-2021 would not be complete without a review and assessment of actions taken after the 2016-2018 plan was completed. A strategic plan is useless unless it is fully executed and actions become accomplishments.

The deliverables and outcomes of the prior plan are illustrated below:

2018 Strategic Plan Initiatives

Objective	Status	Deliverable
Investigate the use of new technology for staff communication and/or training including video conferencing, online chat, message boards, daily digest of staff announcements, etc. to replace in-person meetings and e-mails where practical.	Completed	Rolled out program to staff to install on their desk tops
Explore the use of new technology that could be used to communicate with and engage customers, such as online chat, texting, beacons, etc.	Completed	Conducting Facebook polling
Convert all outdoor lights to LED (or a similar efficient/green technology).	Completed	All outdoor lights (parks, courts, pools) converted to LED as well as Stevenson Field
Develop a plan and timeline for incorporating electronic access controls (such as keyless entry) at all facilities for security measures.	Modified/ Completed	During 2017 staff reviewed electronic access controls at our facilities. The price of this work was going to run between 250k and 500k. Thus, staff decided instead to install cameras at all district facilities, install alarms at all facilities, and add self locking doors at many of the facilities. Staff will look at adding things like access controls at other buildings the district may build in the future but staff will not be adding it to existing buildings
Offer "Neighborhood Nights" events at various neighborhood parks that aren't normally used for Park District events to engage and thank the community and offer opportunities to for residents to get to know their neighbors.	Completed	Hosted four community events in 2018
Evaluate current pricing strategies as well as possible additional alternatives including coupon codes, surge pricing, variable pricing, etc. to create new program and pass pricing guidelines for staff.	Completed	Changed the non-resident fees and implementing ticketing options
Identify a project or topic and conduct a pilot program utilizing a public version of our Launch Pad program (or some other engagement tool) to collect ideas from our community.	Completed	Conducting Facebook Survey Tool to gauge community feedback
Complete a review of Park District facilities where staff are housed to identify opportunities to improve work spaces to be more conducive to innovation, cooperation, and training.	Completed	Added park photos in office building. Investigating Green Wall.
Where practical, shift from on-going committees to cross-department project-based teams with shorter, more specific goals in order to encourage creativity, increase staff involvement and use of strengths, and help eliminate individual work overload.	Completed	New Committees Rolled out in Jan. 2018
Identify areas where the Park District excels and opportunities to share and shine a national spotlight on our organization, including encouraging and recognizing staff that participate in and utilize state and national association resources, present at conferences, write articles, apply for awards, etc.	Completed	Several PDOP staff were published as well as staff presented at various conference. Additionally, the Park District continues to receive awards for its innovation and sustainability efforts.

2017 Strategic Plan Initiatives

Objective	Status	Deliverable
Institute a "Secret Shopper" program.	Completed	12 month schedule, question and PDCC to execute
Review current facility cleaning operations to determine if on-site staff could better assist with facility cleaning and based on use, if specific facilities need more or less contractual cleaning support.	Completed	New Procedures Facility Attendant Involvement
Investigate and implement methods to better measure the return on marketing investments (brochure, websites, flyers, social media, etc.)	Completed	Tracking Tool
Expand Park District inventory program to include all areas and common operational items to better assist with tracking, ordering, and finding items when needed.	Completed	Inventory System
Complete a formal review of The Hub to determine how it has been used, what is still missing, and its relationship to the public storage drive.	Completed	Recommendation Report
Expand upon the Recycling & Zero-Waste Plan to create a full Sustainability Plan with goals that also includes the tracking of key metrics including energy usage.	Completed	Sustainability Plan
Create a customer loyalty program to encourage repeat/additional purchases that also identifies and thanks the Park District's top customers who are ultimately serving as ambassadors in our community.	Complete	Sent note and gift card to \$10K+ families
Review the current volunteer program to evaluate its effectiveness and identify ways to better manage, utilize and/or increase the use of volunteers throughout the Park District.	Completed	Volunteer Events Held
Create a plan to move the Park District towards having a park/playground/public recreation space within 0.25 miles of every resident household address.	Completed	GIS Map
Evaluate opportunities throughout the Park District and implement a plan to better track and increase participation by adults, ages 18-55.	Completed	Marketing Plan
Create a community-wide wellness campaign, possibly exploring partnerships with other national campaigns such as Surgeon General's walking campaign.	Completed	Fit Fest Held
Host "Dinnovations" (discussions regarding innovation topics held over dinner) with public, business owners, other park and recreation peers to discuss topics related to Park District operations and opportunities.	Completed	Hosted two events

2016 Strategic Plan Initiatives

Objective	Status	Deliverable
Create a Technology Plan with goals, to be updated regularly, to evaluate how well current technology is meeting staff and customers needs, set a plan for future growth and development, and addresses the possibility of expanding wireless access and ability for staff to work remotely.	Completed	Document
Create an annual trends report to share with staff referencing external (industry trends, new ideas) and internal (analytics) trends.	Completed	Cards for brainstorming
Simplify the current Customer Service standards to make them easier to communicate and recall and establish and institute a simple set of basic customer service guidelines for all program instructors and facility attendants.	Completed	Simplified one-pager
Create a tool to evaluate Park District facility maintenance and infrastructure quality (similar to Park Report Card).	Completed	Facility Report Card
Select a small team of cross-department staff to visit another agency outside of Illinois at least once a year to exchange ideas, view facilities, and increase networking. Also, possibly identify an international sister city/department to share ideas from a completely different perspective.	Completed	2 In-State and 1 Out-of-State Visit
Create a consistent on-boarding process for new staff addressing seasonal, part-time, and full-time new hires as well as expectations for hiring supervisors that incorporates both the human and technical aspects of bringing a new hire into the organization. An off-boarding system to communicate tasks that need to be completed when a staff member departs the organization should also be developed.	Completed	New HR System with real-time updates on status
Develop a welcome program for new residents, especially targeting new developments, to introduce them to the Park District and encourage the creation of a household account.	Completed	Welcome postcards and folders
Complete a feasibility study regarding the construction of an indoor multi-use recreation facility.	Completed	Recommendation Accepted by Board
Develop a training program with goals that could incorporate topics such as soft and hard skills, supervisory training, and/or a leadership academy. The following should also be considered: A) Ways to better use technology for training purposes, B) Instituting follow-up days after major trainings to digest/implement lessons learned, C) Selling extra seats to other agencies to assist with costs, and D) identifying non-traditional training opportunities that may not be on the radar.	Completed	Rollout of online training

ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Initiatives	Performance Indicators
Park District Mission	Program Registrations
	Pass Sales
	Cancellation Methods
	Refunds Issued
	Park and Facility Customer Satisfaction Score
	Recreation Program Customer Satisfaction Score
Customer and Community Focus	Social Media Engagement
	Customer Satisfaction with Service
	Oak Park Household Participation
	Oak Park Age Group Participation
	Oak Park Household Participation in Scholarship Program
Financial Strength	Overall Percentage of Revenue from Non-Tax Levy Sources
	Fund Actual: Budget Ratio
	Volunteer Hours Served
	Debt Ratio
	Fund Balance
Organizational Excellence	Percentage of Goals Achieved as Scheduled
	Number of Launch Pad Innovations Implemented
	Internal Process Employee Satisfaction Scores
	Number of Claims Submitted to PDRMA
	IPRA Environmental Report Card Score
Staff Excellence	Training Satisfaction Score
	Employee Satisfaction Score
	Staff Turnover Rate
	Staff Wellness Program Participation Rate
	Sick Days Used
Quality Infrastructure Management	Percentage of Parks and Facilities Rated "B" or Better on Infrastructure Report Card
	Average Number of Days Needed to Complete Demand Work Orders
	Utility Usage
	Tree Quality
	Percentage of Capital Improvements Completed as Scheduled

Note: Complete definitions for each performance indicator are included in annual Park District performance

REVIEW AND CONFIRMATION OF MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

The mission, vision, and values are the base from which the PDOP philosophically is led, managed, and operated. They are the fundamental reasons behind the PDOP's existence, ideals, and operation!

During the kickoff commissioners and senior leadership workshop, the mission, vision, and values were reviewed and discussed.

MISSION

The existing mission was reviewed and confirmed:

In partnership with the community, we enrich lives by providing meaningful experiences through programs, parks, and facilities.

There were no changes.

VISION

The vision statement was revised to read as follows:

We strive for excellence in serving the well-being and recreational needs of our diverse community through a collaborative, innovative, and sustainable approach.

There was a slight revision made by reversing the order of words "recreational" and "well-being" to place greater emphasis on "well-being" by listing it first.

The staff were asked whether they believed the **Core Values** were aligned with the PDOP culture and operation. Thirty-four responded yes, whereas one said no. Therefore, **97 percent** of those responding affirmed that the values were in alignment.

VALUES

The value statements were revised to read as follows:

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT. We will actively work to foster ongoing dialogue, relationships, collaborations, and partnerships with and within the community.

RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP. We will maintain a high-performing, engaged, and accountable organization.

INTEGRITY. We will adhere to moral, honest, and ethical principles with a focus on accessibility, inclusion, and transparency.

INNOVATION. We will continuously try new methods and ideas, adapt services according to trends, and continually improve processes.

SUSTAINABILITY. We will thrive through renewal, maintenance, and stewardship in all aspects of operation.

In the statement regarding responsible leadership, the board's position was that the District had already created it and needed to maintain its standards.

In the statement regarding sustainability, the board desired to eliminate the words "succeed" and "and stability" to make the statement clearer and more direct.

2019 THROUGH 2021 INITIATIVES, GOALS, AND ACTIONS

The PDOP based the pillars of its operational strategy on a set of five initiatives, sometimes known as themes. These initiatives were reviewed by the Park District Board of Commissioners in the early phases of developing the plan. They have been updated as needed in each successive plan over the years.

The strategic initiatives center on five perspectives identified as part of a modified balanced scorecard approach including 1) customer perspective, 2) financial perspective, 3) business process perspective, 4) learning and growth perspective, and 5) quality infrastructure management. Under each initiative are organizational goals. The initiatives, goals, and actions for 2019 through 2021 include the following.

Customer and Community Focus		
To create memorable experiences		
Beyond providing quality customer service, the Park District should look for new opportunities to provide memorable experiences for program and event participants as well as visitors to parks and facilities.		
2019	2020	2021
Offer additional free youth, family, and community programs and events		Build nature play areas within parks for challenging and explorative play
To increase customer loyalty		
The Park District should work to develop relationships with customers so they will participate in Park District services year after year, resulting in increased community support, better word-of-mouth advertising, and higher revenues.		
2019	2020	2021
	Assess offering family discounts for 5K race, pool, and rink passes	
To anticipate future needs		
The Park District should analyze its customer base and identify industry trends and evolving customer preferences to anticipate and prepare for future customer and community needs.		
2019	2020	2021
Study barriers to participation including demographics and scholarships	Expand safe after-school opportunities for Oak Park youth/teens	Prepare for 2022-2024 Strategic Plan
To engage the community		
Community engagement involves a two-way conversation between the Park District and its residents and users. The Park District should go beyond simply communicating information and seek out and analyze the best ways to keep conversations going.		
2019	2020	2021
Create a resident team to determine marketing penetration and preferences	Develop plan to reach out to local businesses and organizations	Implement new PDOP community committees to ensure they assist in meeting mission

Financial Strength

To align resources efficiently

The Park District should continuously evaluate and improve processes to maximize efficiencies related to purchasing, staff, storage, training, etc.

2019	2020	2021
	Achieve a 50/50 revenue mix	

To optimize return on investment

Considerable effort and resources are expended to provide programs and services to the community. The Park District should monitor and identify ways to optimize the return on investment of these resources.

2019	2020	2021
		Create a reinvestment plan from sustainability results and savings

To develop sustainable financial plans

When creating or updating plans, the Park District should evaluate the short- and long-term impacts to ensure the agency's financial sustainability.

2019	2020	2021
Strive to not exceed 5 percent of the Oak Park tax bill	Assess the impact of minimum wage increases while keeping program rates affordable	

To maximize funding opportunities

The Park District should seek opportunities to grow revenues from non-property tax sources such as grants, foundations and friends' groups, effective pricing of services, and corporate contributions and sponsorships.

2019	2020	2021
Launch capital campaign to build a community recreation center		

Organizational Excellence

To strive for innovative operational excellence

The Park District should research and adopt operational best practices and process improvements from the public and private sector and seek to share new innovations with the park and recreation industry.

2019	2020	2021
Create an interdepartmental team for promoting social equity	Create an agency-wide volunteer coordinator position to leverage volunteer opportunities	
Complete review for Illinois Distinguished Agency Reaccreditation	Complete review for CAPRA Reaccreditation	
	Submit Gold Medal Application	

To develop strategic partnerships

The Park District should continue to identify, build, and strengthen partnerships that assist the agency in fulfilling its mission and strategic goals.

2019	2020	2021
Explore PHF/PDOP program mix at Pleasant Home	Expand intergovernmental opportunities to realize efficiencies through shared resources	Partner with all of the Oak Park government entities to promote and improve bike safety
Merge with OPRF senior center		

To strategically align organizational efforts

As the Park District increases its planning efforts and strives for sustainability, it should work to ensure that individual efforts are aligned to move the organization forward in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

2019	2020	2021
Create a plan and strategy to allow for PDOP participation in all major community events		

Staff Excellence

To foster a culture of innovation

The Park District should create a work culture that challenges the status quo and finds new ways of doing business based on industry trends, staff involvement, and management sophistication, all in support of improving services.

2019	2020	2021
Educate staff on sustainability plan and their role	Partner with local community to improve diversity hiring and volunteering	

To lead and develop staff

The Park District should develop an excellent leadership system and allocate resources to and create opportunities for staff development and professional growth.

2019	2020	2021
Design an ongoing customer service training program for all current staff and new hires		

To foster a culture of continuous learning

Staff and board members should have opportunities to continuously learn about the agency, the community, and areas of importance needed to successfully perform their jobs, including innovative practices, use of technology, trends, leadership, sustainability, and strategy through contemporary learning practices and information sharing.

2019	2020	2021
Evaluate and restructure onboarding process		Investigate use of technology to provide various trainings

Quality Infrastructure Management

To incorporate sustainable practices

Park District capital improvements, maintenance, and operational practices should incorporate and encourage sustainable practices in terms of environmental, financial, and operational impacts.

2019	2020	2021
Provide dedicated pickleball courts within park system	Provide recycling/composting at special events	Invest in electric vehicles and charging stations
	Add bike pumps to Scoville, RCRC, Longfellow, Barrie, and Stevenson	Expand storm water management projects in partnership with the Village of Oak Park
	Enhance existing park signage to include positive wellness messages to encourage whole-family wellness and social connectivity	

To use systematic approaches

The Park District should strategically make decisions for the greater good of the community that will result in a purposeful approach to maintaining the agency's infrastructure.

2019	2020	2021
Conduct community needs assessment	Inventory indoor and outdoor spaces within and outside the community for possible PDOP use	

To leverage technology

In addition to its ability to drive innovation, the Park District should use technology to improve services, communication, and operations.

2019	2020	2021
Explore the use of technology to increase community engagement in addition to in-person contact		Update website
Replace the registration system using community involvement and expertise		Offer a PDOP hack-a-thon, leveraging community knowledge to improve resident experience and create future technology application

Ongoing Actions

- Identify and pursue park/recreation space acquisition and development
- Creatively use underused exterior spaces in the village
- Enhance walking and biking amenities
- Integrate arts into parks
- Update and implement master plans and ADA transition plan
- Conduct field maintenance management
- Align park master plans with District level of service
- Incorporate batting cages into future improvements
- Manage and refine partnership opportunities
- Manage District historic resources
- Increase District participation levels
- Create and support cultural enhancement opportunities
- Update the capital improvement plan annually
- Communicate collaboration and active partnership efforts
- Evaluate District sustainability opportunities
- Identify and apply for grant funding
- Enhance dashboards to track progress
- Design parks with well-thought-out plans that offer a variety of elements that meet current trends
- Continue to maintain parks and facilities at a level no less than the current standards
- Apply for awards, recognitions, and accreditations that validate and support results of the Park District's mission and strategic initiatives
- Seek partners to deliver programs and services
- Offer a comprehensive variety of programs and services in line with market trends that meet the needs and desires of the community
- Continue to monitor legislative initiatives on local governmental consolidation, property tax freezes, minimum wage increases, and unfunded mandates
- Reinforce transparency
- Facilitate intergovernmental cooperation
- Support employee training and development
- Expand outreach for scholarship opportunities
- Identify and communicate operational efficiencies and effectiveness
- Continue to build and cultivate strong working relationships at the staff level with the Village, school districts, library, and township
- Host an annual meeting with various governmental groups to identify partner opportunities (programming, communication, and shared services)
- Enhance communications to community through participation in Oak Park Area Communicators' Group
- Visit each senior living facility at least annually to learn their needs and communicate PDOP offerings
- Expand recruitment efforts to specifically target groups
- Analyze information systems to ensure long-term use and standardization
- Continue to promote the Carry In - Carry Out program

SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND DATA

The data for analysis primarily came from the public engagement focus groups and workshops with the commissioners and staff as well as previous plans. Secondly, Oak Park local governmental agencies and market data were considered.

Board of Commissioners and Staff

The Board of Commissioners and staff participated in a series of workshops to ascertain their perspectives of how the PDOP was functioning externally and internally. The primary tools utilized were PEST and SWOT analyses. An additional question was asked regarding what the PDOP could do to make a positive impact on the community that it currently was not doing. The information gathered was commingled from both groups.

PEST Analysis	
POLITICAL Intergovernmental relationships Anti-tax sentiment Governmental consolidation	ECONOMIC Property tax freeze Minimum wage increase Current labor agreements Escalating health-care costs Increasing demands for special needs services Inclusion costs Tight labor market Challenges employing local youth Revenues growing
SOCIAL Registrations not reflective of demographics Aging population Language barriers Addressing health and wellness Scholarship demand outpacing resources Lack of diversity	TECHNOLOGICAL Website in need of improvement Application of technology to reach all segments of the community Application of technology for efficiency Upgrading slow connectivity Improvement of online presence
Future Positive Impacts	
The commissioners, staff, and key stakeholders were asked to identify one new thing the PDOP could do to make a positive impact on the community. Overwhelmingly, the number-one response was the building of a community recreation center. Unique responses included the following: Build a community recreation center Make community more bikeable and walkable Recruit minorities Collaborate with the private sector Offer multi-day trips to unique destinations Offer free drop-in and pop-up events	

SWOT Analysis	
STRENGTHS Leadership and management Parks, programs, and services Intergovernmental collaboration Financial position and stability Long-range planning Use of data and metrics Infrastructure well maintained Good reaction to change Desirable place to work Focus on excellence Effective Park Board Community engagement Use of technology Learning and development of staff Environmental stewards	WEAKNESSES Lack of diversity throughout organization Delivery of services to all segments of the community Programs not attracting minorities Finding qualified part-time staff Registration system Community landlocked with limited open space Onboarding of new staff
OPPORTUNITIES Future development of a community recreation center Expiration of TIF districts Walkable/bikeable community culture Partnerships Intergovernmental cooperation Increased interest in health and well-being Use of mobile technology Use of MPOWER data	THREATS Anti-tax sentiment Lack of intergovernmental cooperation Property tax freeze Population growth Governmental consolidation Competition with private sector offering programs Minimum wage increase Instability of State of Illinois Competition with neighboring park districts with newer facilities

Key Stakeholder Focus Groups

For this update to the strategic plan, a community engagement element was added. Community engagement is the process of working collaboratively with groups to address issues that impact the well-being of people.

The PDOP has many partnerships that help mobilize resources, influence systems, and serve as catalysts for positive outcomes in the community. Participants for the focus groups were chosen from broad categories of partner groups as well as selected community members. Members at large participated in the Open Community Forum. The process identified issues affecting the delivery of services. Ultimately, the District processed these issues with the goal of fulfilling its mission and benefitting individuals, families, the environment, and our local economy.

Greg Petry Consulting LLC facilitated nine distinct targeted focus group discussions.

This approach was chosen not only to fulfill the scope of the project but to produce several ancillary benefits:

- Create greater community connectiveness with constituents and peers through community engagement
- Gain an enlightened view and deeper understanding of how PDOP is perceived by the community
- Add value to the process and plan via constituent participation
- Enhance the image of PDOP
- Enhance individual and organizational credibility through inclusion
- Reduce any divisiveness
- Enhance social equity via outreach across various sectors of the community.

Participants: Community, board, and staff

Focus Group Discussions

Critical issues facing the community and Park District were discussed, and a forced choice was made to determine rankings.

#1 Spaces

Participants felt there was a lack of indoor and outdoor space for activities. The current spaces are well maintained, but their design does not offer challenging experiences. More areas for exploration need to be created in future spaces. Additional safe after-school spaces are needed. In all focus groups, the development of a community recreation center was mentioned as highly desirable and would meet the space needs of the community.

#2 Taxes

Participants felt that the current tax rate was reasonable and should be kept as low as possible. The District should communicate the value of what tax revenues support, how they are invested, and the outcomes.

#3 Social Equity

Participants felt there should be more inclusion and sensitivity toward minorities. Diversity is missing throughout the Park District among the elected officials, full-time staff, and program participants.

Participants discussed what the PDOP was good and bad at as well as how they could correct and enhance those practices.

FINDINGS

▶ **Activities**

It was expressed that after-school and cultural arts activities were critical for child development and needed to be expanded. More activities to keep preteens and teens active are desired. Activities to improve the health and wellness of seniors is important so they can remain in their homes as residents of Oak Park. Activities offered seem to be too structured, and there is a need for more open play and exploration.

▶ **Barriers**

Attendees frequently mentioned that they felt barriers to participation existed. Affordability was mentioned the most. When pressure was applied to describe the problem, it was described as a concern that those with lesser means were most likely excluded. Ways for greater inclusion should be sought.

The registration system was mentioned as a barrier because it is difficult to navigate.

▶ **Community Outreach/Engagement**

Partnerships were recognized as desirable, particularly with regard to the business community. Participants felt the PDOP should reach out to the business community to improve relations so that both could gain a greater understanding of each other in serving the community.

Intergovernmental cooperation was considered vital but at times lacking and in need of improvement.

There was an expressed need for the use of volunteers and expanding volunteer opportunities for young adults in the community. Youth employment opportunities were considered important because they provide lifelong lessons.

Being transparent while engaging the community was mentioned. Participants desired more communication and publications, particularly for events and happenings outside the District that would be of interest to people. People want the Park District to implement innovative ways to communicate on a constant and consistent basis: the more, the better.

▶ **Operational Systems**

The operations are viewed as efficient and effective. However, the PDOP must consider threats such as the effects of minimum wage increases, unfunded state mandates, and state budget stalemates.

▶ **Parks**

The parks are considered well maintained and their improvements well planned. Participants are pleased with the variety of elements within the parks. However, there was an expressed desire for more bathrooms and that the existing ones should be cleaner.

▶ **Programs**

It was recognized that there is a comprehensive variety of programs that are generally affordable. The District should strive to keep them affordable, and scholarships should continue to be available to those who cannot afford to pay. A desire was expressed to have more offerings for early childhood programs and adult drop-in events.

Sustainability/Green

More recycling is desired.

Participants were asked to identify another park district, recreational provider, or business they patronize and describe what resonated with them about it.

FINDINGS

- ▶ Large natural areas and larger parks with attractions
- ▶ Museums, arts, and culture
- ▶ Pools, indoor and outdoor
- ▶ Lighted outdoor spaces
- ▶ Cheap meeting spaces
- ▶ Health clubs
- ▶ Berwyn, Chicago Park District, Elmwood Park, and Melrose Park parks and facilities
- ▶ Pickleball courts
- ▶ Golf courses

Attractive customer service traits that resonated with participants were “friendly,” “welcoming,” “feels good,” “positive personal experience,” and “feeling connected.”

Participants were asked this question: If they could add any feature, product, or service to the Park District, what would it be?

FINDINGS

- ▶ Community recreation center
- ▶ Lighted fields
- ▶ Pickleball courts
- ▶ Bicycling: Connections, trails, programs, and pumps in parks
- ▶ More scholarships

One participant summed up their patronage of neighboring park districts as “Because I need to, not that I want to. We need a community recreation center.”

Related PDOP Planning Documents

This strategic plan was built and developed from a review of the accumulated information that the District had compiled from prior plans. These plans were reviewed and were useful in understanding the past and activating new thoughts and ideas for building this plan. The plans reviewed included the following:

- 2015–2024 Comprehensive Master Plan
- Fiscal Year 2018 Budget
- 2016–2018 Strategic Plan (including District goals)
- 2019–2023 Capital Improvement Plan

Village, Library, Schools, and Township Strategic Plans

In addition to reviewing internal plans of the Park District, it was important to review those of governmental agencies within Oak Park. A review of long-range plans of the Village, library, school districts, and township was completed to assess the alignment of priorities among the governmental bodies. Plans reviewed included the following:

- *Envision Oak Park: A Comprehensive Plan for the Oak Park Community, Adopted September 15, 2014*
- *Oak Park Public Library Strategic Plan 2018*
- *Oak Park Elementary School District 97: VISION97 4ALL 2107-2022 Plan for Accelerated Growth and Success for All Students*
- *Oak Park and River Forest High School District 200 Strategic Plan 2017-2022*
- *Township of Oak Park Township 2018 Annual Reports and Mission, Vision, and Values Statements*

The Park District maintains a positive working relationship with many governmental agencies within the community. There are many cooperative initiatives among the groups to share resources for delivery of efficient and effective services for constituents. Examples include sharing properties for programs, shared facilities for community-wide emergency services, equipment usage, event coordination, and joint purchasing.

The Village's Envision plan provides the most detailed guiding plan for supporting strong relationships among governments, residents, and businesses in Oak Park. The plan highlights a series of recommendations that entities can collaborate on.

The most relevant recommendations related to the PDOP strategic plan included the following:

- Strengthening parks as a community focal point
- Promoting the arts
- Preserving, maintaining, and purchasing significant properties and monuments
- Promoting and celebrating cultural icons and attractions
- Promoting arts tourism
- Installing public art
- Accommodating easy access to parks
- Promoting sustainability, stormwater management, and water conservation
- Caring for trees
- Improving diversity education and awareness
- Enhancing accessibility
- Enhancing public safety
- Promoting healthy living

Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) Data

The Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) is an international supplier of geographic information system (GIS) software, web GIS, and geodatabase management applications. The company is headquartered in Redlands, California. It provides geo-demographic intelligence on how clusters of people make lifestyle choices.

For this plan, the leisure market potential data from ESRI were used. Data are characterized using a Market Potential Index (MPI), which

measures the probable demand for a product or service in the Village of Oak Park. The MPI shows the likelihood that an adult resident of the service area will participate in certain activities compared to the US national average. The national average is 100; therefore, numbers below 100 would represent a lower-than-average participation rate, and numbers above 100 would represent a higher-than-average participation rate. The service area is compared to the national average. Below is a recap of those consumer behaviors that are above 100.

Attended classical music/opera performance 210	Participated in canoeing/kayaking 132	Participated in fantasy sports league 119
Participated in ice skating 192	Danced/went dancing 131	Went to bar/nightclub 132
Went to art gallery 187	Participated in swimming 131	Played billiards/pool 118
Participated in yoga 173	Participated in tailgating 131	Member of fraternal order 118
Went to museum 170	Participated in soccer 130	Visited a theme park 117
Participated in skiing (downhill) 170	Participated in bicycling (mountain) 129	Participated in trivia games 116
Went to live theater 170	Participated in golf 129	Participated in bowling 115
Participated in hiking 167	Played musical instrument 128	Participated in Frisbee 115
Participated in book club 166	Played board game 127	Member of AARP 114
Attended horse races 162	Participated in horseback riding 127	Participated in baseball 112
Participated in Pilates 162	Cooked for fun 126	Participated in basketball 111
Participated in backpacking 155	Attended sports events 126	Played cards 111
Attended dance performance 150	Participated in aerobics 125	Did photo album/scrapbooking 111
Participated in tennis 149	Did baking 125	Member of union 109
Member of charitable organization 148	Did birdwatching 125	Participated in ping pong 108
Participated in rock climbing 146	Did crossword puzzle 125	Played computer game (online w/o software) 107
Did painting/drawing 144	Participated in walking for exercise 125	Attended country music performance 105
Participated in jogging/running 144	Did Sudoku puzzle 124	Participated in volleyball 105
Did photography 144	Participated in word games 124	Played chess 104
Participated in Zumba 144	Attended movie 123	Played computer game (offline w/software) 104
Attended adult education course 143	Went to zoo 123	Participated in indoor gardening/plant care 103
Participated in weight lifting 143	Went on overnight camping trip 122	Visited a theme park 102
Attended rock music performance 142	Rented DVDs 122	Attended an auto show 101
Participated in bicycling (road) 140	Participated in fishing (saltwater) 122	Member of church board 101
Went to beach 141	Participated in karaoke 122	
Read book 134	Refurnished furniture 121	
	Dined out 120	

PLAN DEVELOPERS AND PARTICIPANTS

Thank you to all who participated in the process of developing this plan.

PUBLIC

The creation of the Park District of Oak Park Strategic Plan would not have been complete or possible without input and participation from the public, taxpayers, and constituents. Forty-one people participated in the eight key stakeholder focus group meetings and 43 people attended the community-wide forum.

PARK DISTRICT OF OAK PARK BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Vic Guarino, President

Sandy Lentz, Vice President

David Wick, Treasurer

Kassie Porreca, Secretary

Paul Aeschleman, Commissioner

STAFF

Jan Arnold, CPRP, Executive Director

Karen Gruszka, Executive Assistant

Paula A. Bickel, SHRM-SCP, Director of Human Resources and Risk Management

Kyle Cratty, Director of Finance

Mike Loszach, Program Manager – Afterschool, Preschool, Arts and Nature

Laura Greeley, Program Supervisor – Fitness, Dance, and Circus

Bill Hamilton, CPRP, Superintendent of Revenue Facilities

Chris Lindgren, Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds

Maureen McCarthy, CPRP, Superintendent of Recreation

Diane Stanke, CPRP, Director of Marketing and Customer Service

CONSULTING SUPPORT

Greg Petry Consulting LLC

APPENDIX ONE: Implementation Assignments

Customer & Community Focus

To create memorable experiences.

Beyond providing quality customer service, the Park District should look for new opportunities to provide memorable experiences for program and event participants as well as visitors to parks and facilities.

Year	Goal	Lead	Assist
2019	Offer additional free youth, family and community programs and events	Maureen McCarthy	Susan Crane
2021	Build nature play areas within parks for challenging and explorative play	Chris Lindgren	Leah Pryor Patti Staley

To increase customer loyalty.

The Park District should work to develop relationships with customers so that they will participate in Park District services year after year, resulting in increased community support, better word-of-mouth advertising, and higher revenues.

Year	Goal	Lead	Assist
2020	Assess offering family discounts for race, pool, and rink passes	Bill Hamilton	Laura Greely Scott Sekulich

To anticipate future needs.

The Park District should analyze its customer base and identify industry trends and evolving customer preferences in order to anticipate and prepare for future customer and community needs.

Year	Goal	Lead	Assist
2019	Study barriers to participation including demographics and scholarships	Diane Stanke	Melissa Martinez Illiana De La Rosa
2020	Expand safe after school opportunities for Oak Park youth/teens	Maureen McCarthy	Kelsey Tumpane Mike Loszach
2021	Prepare for 2022-2024 Strategic Plan	Jan Arnold	Kayla Fauria Greg Stopka

To engage the community.

Community engagement involves a two-way conversation between the Park District and its residents and users. The Park District should go beyond simply communicating information and seek out and analyze the best ways to keep conversations going.

Year	Goal	Lead	Assist
2019	Create a resident team to determine marketing penetration and preferences	Diane Stanke	Dan Schaffer
2020	Develop outreach plan to local businesses and organizations	Diane Stanke	Melissa Martinez Bill Hamilton
2021	Implement new PDOP community committees to ensure they assist in meeting mission	Diane Stanke	Melissa Martinez Kayla Fauria

Financial Strength

To align resources efficiently.

The Park District should continuously evaluate and improve processes in order to maximize efficiencies related to purchasing, staff, storage, training, etc.

Year	Goal	Lead	Assist
2020	Achieve the revenue mix 50/50	Kyle Cratty	Bill Hamilton

To optimize return on investment.

Considerable effort and resources are expended to provide programs and services to the community. The Park District should monitor and identify ways to optimize the return on investment of these resources.

Year	Goal	Lead	Assist
2021	Create a reinvestment plan from sustainability results and savings	Kyle Cratty	Nelson Acevedo Illiana De La Rosa

To develop sustainable financial plans

When creating or updating plans, the Park District should evaluate the short- and long-term impacts in order to ensure the agency's financial sustainability.

Year	Goal	Lead	Assist
2019	Strive to not exceed 5% of the Oak Park tax bill	Kyle Cratty	Illiana De La Rosa
2020	Assess the impact of minimum wage increases while keeping program rates affordable	Kyle Cratty	Kayla Fauria Dan Schaffer

To maximize funding opportunities.

The Park District should seek opportunities to grow revenues from non-property tax sources such as grants, foundations and friends' groups, effective pricing of services, and corporate contributions and sponsorships.

Year	Goal	Lead	Assist
2019	Launch capital campaign to build a Community Recreation Center	Jan Arnold	Laura Greely Dan Schaffer

Organizational Excellence

To strive for innovative operational excellence.

The Park District should research and adopt operational best practices and process improvements from the public and private sector and make an effort to share new innovations with the park and recreation industry.

Year	Goal	Lead	Assist
2019	Create an inter-departmental team for promoting social equity	Jan Arnold	Leadership Team Illiana De La Rosa
2019	Complete review for Illinois Distinguished Agency Reaccreditation	Kyle Cratty	Greg Stopka Bill Hamilton
2020	Create an agency-wide volunteer coordinator position	Paula Bickel	Leah Pryor Patti Staley
2020	Complete review for CAPRA	Kyle Cratty	Greg Stopka
2020	Submit Gold Medal	Diane Stanke	Kayla Fauria Mike Loszach Greg Stopka

To develop strategic partnerships.

The Park District should continue to identify, build, and strengthen partnerships that assist the agency with fulfilling its mission and strategic goals.

Year	Goal	Lead	Assist
2019	Explore PHF/PDOP program mix at Pleasant Home	Maureen McCarthy	Susan Crane Laura Greely
2019	Merge with OPRF senior center	Maureen McCarthy	Laura Greely Megan Ulczak
2020	Expand intergovernmental opportunities to realize efficiencies thru shared resources	Jan Arnold	Bill Hamilton Greg Stopka
2021	Partner with all of the Oak Park government entities to promote and improve bike safety	Jan Arnold	Kelsey Tumpane

To strategically align organizational efforts.

As the Park District increases its planning efforts and strives for sustainability, it should work to ensure that individual efforts are aligned to move the organization forward in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

Year	Goal	Lead	Assist
2019	Create a plan and strategy to allow for PDOP participation in all major community events	Diane Stanke	Maureen McCarthy Bill Hamilton

Staff Excellence

To foster a culture of innovation.

The Park District should create a work culture that challenges the status quo and finds new ways of doing business based on industry trends, staff involvement, and management sophistication, all in support of improving services.

Year	Goal	Lead	Assist
2019	Educate staff on sustainability plan and their role	Chris Lindgren	Leah Pryor Nelson Acevedo
2020	Partner with local community to improve diversity hiring and volunteering	Paula Bickel	Illiana De La Rosa

To lead and develop staff.

The Park District should develop an excellent leadership system and will allocate resources to and create opportunities for staff development and professional growth.

Year	Goal	Lead	Assist
2019	Design an ongoing customer service training program for all current staff and new hires	Paula Bickel	Kayla Fauria Mike Loszach

To foster a culture of continuous learning.

Staff and Board members should have opportunities to continuously learn about the agency, the community, and about areas of importance needed to successfully perform their jobs, including innovative practices, use of technology, trends, leadership, sustainability, and strategy through contemporary learning practices and information sharing.

Year	Goal	Lead	Assist
2019	Evaluate and restructure onboarding process	Paula Bickel	Bill Hamilton Greg Stopka
2021	Investigate use of technology to provide various trainings	Paula Bickel	Mike Loszach Greg Stopka

Quality Infrastructure Management

To incorporate sustainable practices.

Park District capital improvements, maintenance, and operational practices should incorporate and encourage sustainable practices in terms of environmental, financial, and operational impacts.

Year	Goal	Lead	Assist
2019	Provide dedicated pickleball courts within park system	Chris Lindgren	Chad Drufke Travis Stephens
2020	Provide recycling/composting at special events	Maureen McCarthy	Susan Crane
2020	Add bike pumps to Scoville, RCRC, Longfellow, Barrie and Stevenson	Chris Lindgren	Nelson Acevedo
2020	Enhance existing park signage to include positive wellness messages to encourage whole family wellness and social connectivity	Chris Lindgren	Laura Greely Kelsey Tumpane
2021	Invest in electric vehicles and charging stations	Bill Hamilton	Travis Stevens Chris Lindgren
2021	Expand storm water management projects in partnership with the VOP	Chris Lindgren	Patti Staley Travis Stephens

To utilize systematic approaches.

The Park District should strategically make decisions for the greater good of the community that will result in a purposeful approach to maintaining the agency's infrastructure.

Year	Goal	Lead	Assist
2019	Conduct community needs assessment	Diane Stanke	Melissa Martinez Maureen McCarthy
2020	Inventory indoor and outdoor spaces within and outside the community for possible PDOP use	Bill Hamilton	Chad Drufke Illiana De La Rosa

To leverage technology.

In addition to its ability to drive innovation, the Park District should also use technology to improve services, communication, and operations.

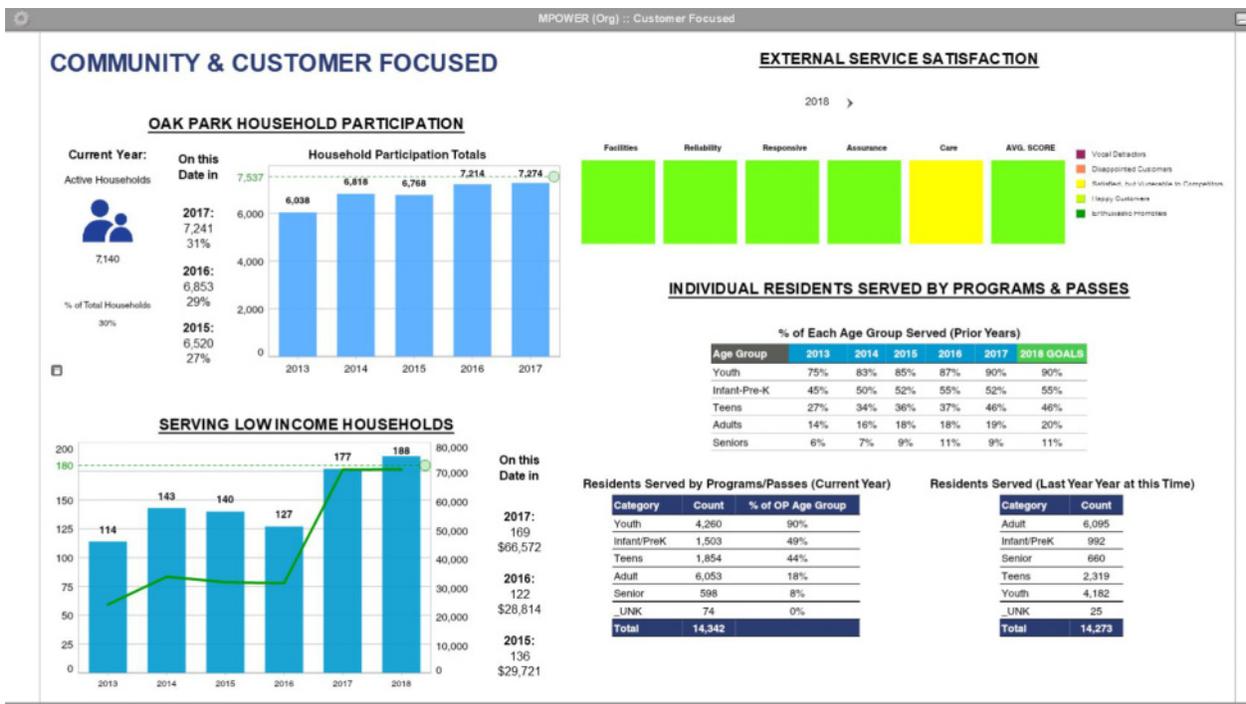
Year	Goal	Lead	Assist
2019	Explore the use of technology to increase community engagement in addition to in person contact	Diane Stanke	Greg Stopka
2019	Replace the registration system utilizing community involvement and expertise	Kyle Cratty	Keith Kerrigan Kayla Fauria Mike Loszach Scott Sekulich Kristina St. Pierre Chad Drufke
2021	Update PDOP Website	Diane Stanke	Mike Loszach Scott Sekulich
2021	Offer a PDOP Hack-a-thon to leverage community knowledge to improve resident experience and create future technology application	Kyle Cratty	Greg Stopka Michael Elden

APPENDIX TWO: Dashboards for Organizational Performance Measures

Park District Mission



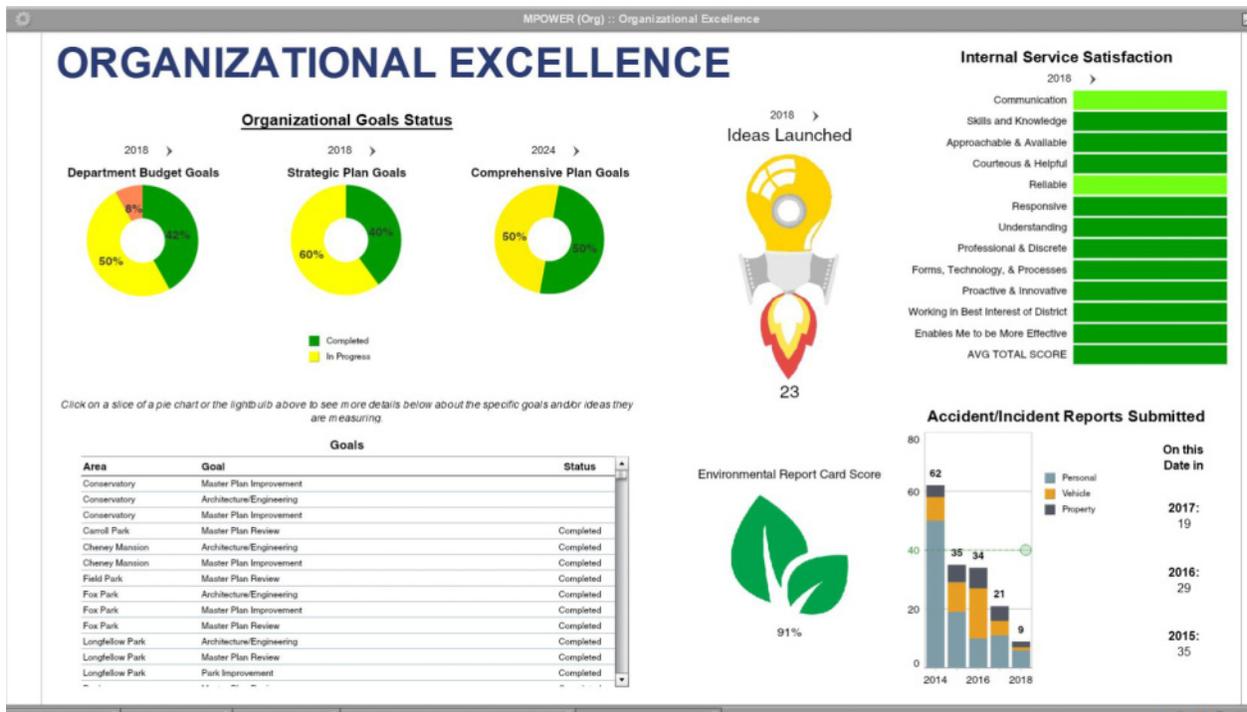
Customer and Community Focus



Financial Strength



Organizational Excellence



Staff Excellence



Quality Infrastructure Management

